

J.M. DeBord



RadOwl's Crash  
Course in Dream  
Interpretation

# **RadOwl's Crash Course in Dream Interpretation**

*J.M. DeBord*

*aka "RadOwl"*

# **RadOwl's Crash Course in Dream Interpretation**

## **How to Interpret Dreams**

**Written By J.M. DeBord**

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# 3 Simple Facts + 3 Simple Steps

*a radically simple and effective process of dream interpretation*

To interpret dreams the RadOwl way, let's begin with lesson #1 taught at Dream School, the online home for dream interpretation:

You already know what it all means because *you create your dreams*, albeit subconsciously. This simple fact means that dream interpretation is a process of *remembering what you already know*.

Allow me this opportunity to show you what to do next to interpret your dreams *the RadOwl way*. I earned my nickname by teaching a 3-step process of dream interpretation that's radically simple, effective, and modern, and by helping many thousands of people understand their dreams in my capacity as RadOwl, the main moderator of [Reddit Dreams](#) the most popular online place to discuss and share dreams. As briefly as possible I'll show you my way of doing it.

The Crash Course demonstrates my D3 dream interpretation process through fascinating examples. In the coming pages we will use my process to examine dreams step by step. I'll show you the hidden meaning in them and how to benefit from their wisdom and advice.

**Everyone can interpret their dreams.** In fact, you're the only one who truly knows what your dreams mean, so learn how to do it for yourself.

DIY dream interpretation!

# 3 Simple Facts about Dreams

**Simple fact #1** is you know subconsciously what your dreams mean.

**Simple fact #2:** Dreams are stories, like parables that teach and illuminate.

**Simple fact #3:** Dreams use symbolism.

The most meaningful dreams are also the most story-like and engaging. They invite you to enter a make-believe world and forget it's make-believe. Dreams are the ultimate virtual reality where everything you see and interact with is a projection of your inner world.

Dreams tell stories using the language of symbolism. Symbolism is the native language of your unconscious mind—the very same mind that creates your dreams. Translating symbolism is an essential skill for dream interpretation. Take my [courses on dream symbols](#) at DreamSchool.net to get the full story. I'll give you the abbreviated version in this Crash Course.

The three simple facts teach you how to approach your dreams. Dreams are stories (simple fact #2) told using symbolism (simple fact #3), and deep down within yourself you know already what they mean (simple fact #1). Now you're ready for the three steps.

## 3 Simple Steps to Interpret Dreams

1. Identify the dream's story elements and narrative components.
2. Interpret the symbolism and analyze the story.

3. Connect the details in context and reflect on your life.

**Step 1: Elements and Components.** A dream's story elements are its settings, characters, and symbols. Narrative components are the actions, reactions, and resolutions. Identify them for Step 2. This practice teaches you to approach the dream as a story first. Then you tease out the meaning of the symbolism and the experience.

**Step 2: Interpret and Analyze.** Interpret the symbolism of the dream's elements and components by using the three decoding techniques I teach: associate, simplify, and amplify. Analyze the story for use of metaphor, exaggeration, comparison-contrast and other storytelling devices such as [pun and wordplay](#). The story is told in the language of symbolism, except on rare occasions when dreams are literal and objective instead of figurative and subjective.

**Step 3: Connect and Reflect.** All details of a dream connect together in context to tell a story. The story paints a big picture that brings everything together. See the big picture, find the point or moral to the story, and it leads to uncovering the personal meaning and message.

Step 3 is when the prep work of Steps 1 and 2 pays off. You utilize the ideas you generate by interpreting the symbolism and analyzing the story, to find personal parallels between dream life and waking life. Trace the dream back to its source and discover what it wants to teach or show you.

Close reflection on what's happening, just happened or soon to happen in your life—outer life and inner life—reveals the hidden meaning more often than not, or at least gets you started. Some dreams require more work, time, or growth to decipher. Some require or benefit from more

[advanced tools of dream analysis](#). And some dreams can't be understood conventionally.

The three simple facts and three simple steps together are called D3, short for DREAMS 1-2-3. You start with the base of knowledge found in the three facts. Then you use the three steps, each one based on the three facts, to interpret the symbolism, analyze the story, and *remember what you already know*. Dream interpretation is really a process to remind yourself what you know subconsciously, and it's easier than figuring out what you don't know!

## The Dream Experience

You crack open a dream to find the hidden meaning by using tools for decoding symbolism and analyzing the story that I'm about to give you. But the dream is also an experience—it's never "just a dream"—and behind it is a question that aims at the heart of dreaming itself:

Why?

Why give yourself the experience? Why create a completely believable simulated reality for you to visit nightly? Finding the answer kickstarts the dream interpretation process.

For example, you go to bed with a big decision on your mind and wake up from a dream knowing it's somehow related. You can scrutinize through that lens—you know why you had the dream, now work backwards to the meaning.

But be careful of jumping to conclusions. Dreams are known to defy expectations and reveal layers of meaning over time. They can speak simultaneously to various levels of you such as body, mind, spirit, and beyond, and to diverse areas of life such as family, work, social, love, and personal. The dreaming mind is exceptionally good at seeing their interconnections, often overlooked or unknown consciously,



and it creates symbols that sum up all the situational and personal dynamics in one image. It's no wonder then that the much-respected dream interpreter Jeremy Taylor says there's *no such thing as a dream with only one meaning*.

D3 is a process to systematically engage a dream to find out what the experience means personally to you.

Dream symbols are intermediaries between the unconscious mind and the conscious mind. They channel the dynamic energy of the psyche for the benefit of its development. They are entryways to your inner world and the foundation of the psyche, known as the archetypal layer. It's a mysterious place. The rules of rationality and logic don't apply, similar to how the quantum level of material reality behaves mysteriously. My D3 process can take you far, but to go further you will need more knowledge and training, and perhaps a Jungian dream analyst as your guide.

You are the mystery at the heart of your dreams. Edgar Cayce, a great dream interpreter, said he interpreted the dreamer more so than their dream. In your dreams you see yourself reflected back. You give yourself the experience to know yourself better.

### *Your dreams: the story of your life as it is written*

Dreams tell the story of what's happening presently in your inner and outer life. Your life is a story that's written day by day and night by night. Thinking of it that way can be tremendously empowering. You are the author writing the story of your life along with your co-author, the intelligent source that creates your dreams.

Dreams are stories that help you understand and shape your personal narratives, and those narratives shape the

story of your life. Your dream life is as much a part of your story as is your waking life. People tend to think of dream life and waking life as totally separate, but they are actually a continuum, and one affects the other.

Dreams are sure to pick up on the major happenings in your life. If a big event happens during the day, a dream is certain to replay it by night, right? Probably, but in symbolic form. *In story form.*

For example, a big argument between close friends could be translated symbolically as a dream about a civil war. A civil war is a great way to tell the story because the conflict is between two sides who used to be on the same side. It's a translation from literal to figurative. Then the dream uses imagery such as guns shooting or bombs exploding to symbolize the loud words and heated exchanges of the argument. The personal hurts and pains inflicted during the argument are translated symbolically as bloody wounds, scorch marks, blasted landscapes and so forth.

Or say because of your loyalty that you dread making a huge decision about a change of career or school. For example, you are tempted by a better job offer, but your loyalty to your current employer causes conflict about accepting it. Your dreaming mind tells the story as being chased by a dog. The dog symbolizes the idea of loyalty—dogs are known for their loyalty—and the decision you need to make chases you figuratively. The moral of the story is, face the dog and what it represents before making your decision.

Dreams shine a spotlight on your deepest inner processes and feelings and give voice to what you aren't hearing or noticing.

Dreams also provide experiences like virtual reality simulations to pass on the information for you to better

know, better understand, better adapt, better plan, better decide, better create, and *better feel*.

Dreams don't make your decisions for you—that would violate your free will. Instead, they act as advisers. They counsel. They inform. They gather the facts and tell the various sides of the story, including the sides that aren't rational or logical.

The unconscious mind, your dream creator, looks behind the scenes and at the big picture and shares with you what it sees. It responds to what's been on your mind and heart. It shows, teaches, and guides. Get to know this fantastically vast other side of yourself and you will thank yourself for the rest of your life and possibly beyond.

## Two words for you:

*Psychological*

*Digestion*

I give props to Dr. Rubin Naiman, a sleep medicine specialist and dream explorer, for the best two-word summary of why we dream:

Psychological digestion. We dream to digest the experience of life.

Dr. Carl Jung summarizes the purpose of dreaming with one word: self-regulation. Just as the body regulates itself, so does the psyche via dreams.

I like to say that dreaming helps us cope.

Now add to Dr. Naiman's insight, *dreaming digests the experience of life with the end goal of becoming the ideal*

*you*, a fully integrated and actualized individual. Dr. Jung calls the process *individuation*.

Life is a daily building process. Everything you experience is processed, digested, and either absorbed or put aside while dreaming. The daily process is the small, fast wheel that turns a big, slower one: your evolution as a person, which if the dreaming mind has its way will follow nature's blueprint developed over thousands of generations of our species. The blueprint is encoded in the unconscious mind, the creator of your dreams.

See the implication? When you dream, you interact with *the mind of nature itself*. Dr. Jung calls it *the collective unconscious*.

To understand dreaming you begin with what it does for you daily: psychological digestion, memory processing, emotional regulation, and overall rejuvenation. Your dreaming mind has an agenda for the long term, too, and it's the primary driving force behind your development as a conscious being alive in this time and place.

That sentence is worth repeating. Your dreaming mind has an agenda for the long term, and it's the primary driving force behind your development as a conscious being alive in this time and place.

Now you know the basics of RadOwl's way of interpreting dreams. I start with three simple facts, then utilize the three simple steps, keeping in mind the reasons, functions, and purposes of dreaming. That's the foundation. Next, we get to the process.

But before we begin the demonstrations...

Expect to find layers of meaning in your dreams that won't be uncovered all at once. Time has a way of brushing away things that prevent you from apprehending what you desire

to fully know and understand. Your desire will carry you forward and clear any roadblocks.

Why did you give yourself the experience of the dream? What are you really trying to tell yourself? How is nature sharing its wisdom and perspective with you? Keep those questions in mind as you walk through the D3 process.

And please remember the point isn't to be right about everything. It isn't to reduce the dream to cause and effect or to some theory or another. You interpret your dreams so you can have a better and more personal relationship with the mind that creates dreams, the unconscious. It leads you to being the greater person and personality you are meant to be.

Now the fun begins as I show you how to use the simple facts together with the simple steps. Demo #1 is next.

# Demo #1: How to Interpret Dreams

## *Interpreting Dreams about Outer Life*

One reason why we dream is to process the daily accumulation of memory. The link between dreaming and memory is well-established in neuroscience, medicine and other disciplines. Sorting short-term memories for long-term integration in the brain is a basic reason for dreaming. That's how I understand it. I'm not a neuroscientist.

Optional reading:

- [The Neuroscience of Dreaming](#)
- [The Science Behind Dreaming](#)
- [PDF book: The Science of Dreaming by Robert J. Hoss](#)

But I am a dream interpreter who has witnessed thousands of times that your dreaming mind doesn't just replay memories. It translates them to symbolic imagery, which you then translate back to conventional language during dream interpretation. The dreaming mind places short-term memories into broad and meaningful context created by you, life, and your deepest inner self.

The story of the dream also provides context to understand the meaning, and the coming demos of radowl's dream interpretation process show you how context is the glue that holds together a dream.

Memory-based dreams speak to dynamics of your outer life as well as inner life, including your thoughts, feelings,

emotions, and perceptions—but especially feelings. Knowing this, search your dreams for which memories they're processing and why.

That's the rope a good scientist or doctor climbs to a dream's meaning because it follows the strongest evidence from the science of dreaming. But a dream interpreter knows—and I mean really knows—that dreaming is a phenomenon with no single correct approach or theory, and that dreams bubble up from a source we barely know, which has an agenda we barely understand. The roots of dreaming grow much deeper than mere memory processing—they nurse from the living heart of who and what you are.

### *D3: Your process of dream interpretation*

Let's use the D3 process to interpret a dream that tells a story about an event that happened in a young man's life. It's based on a memory of a recent event in his outer life, but normally we wouldn't know this when beginning the process.

Title of the dream: **Bad Hookup**

- ***"In my dream I hook up with this girl. She says it's OK because she broke up with her boyfriend. We spend the night together at her place. The next day I find out she really hadn't broken up with her boyfriend and cheated on him to be with me. It's very upsetting."***

*[This dream was shared at Reddit Dreams. It's told in present tense to put your mind's eye into the scene, to feel and experience it. Always tell your dreams in present tense.]*

What is the dream really saying? It's a story told symbolically. Without knowing it's based on the memory

of an event from the previous day, you're at square one and have a lot of avenues to test as possible routes to the meaning.

In this case I find the meaning in the story by applying a dream interpretation technique I teach in Step 2 of the D3 process, called *simplify*. What's the basic idea behind the imagery and story? Boil it down to the simplest statement possible and turn it into questions. I'll show you how. First, we walk through the process.

## *Step 1: Elements and Components*

In Step 1 you identify the settings, characters, symbols, actions, reactions, and resolutions. A dream can use one or all of them. Let's begin with the story elements.

Settings of Bad Hookup: The place where he meets the girl (not noted by the dreamer), and her place. In this case, the settings don't say much. Other times, they're central to the story.

Characters: girl, her boyfriend, and the dreamer. They all symbolize something or come together in the big picture. The boyfriend doesn't appear in the dream, important to note for story analysis. The less of a role a dream character plays in the story, the less importance it has in the big picture, usually. The dreamer is a participant in the story, too, which makes him a character.

In Step 2 we will utilize D3's tools to find the symbolism and know the characters through their parts in the story, so in Step 1 we need to identify them.

Symbols: There are no symbols to note, though the dream features symbolic actions, as we're about to see.

Actions: cheating; being lied to or given false information. And you might say sex is an action, but the



dream hints at it instead of shows it. That suggests to me that the dream's main idea, found during Step 3 when you connect the dots, won't be the sex part of the dream.

Instead, the hint of sex is better understood as a detail in a larger story about cheating. With cheating, sex is involved somehow, usually. The story is told through cheating, not sex, though. And because cheating is the central idea, it's central for understanding the dream. Otherwise, *sex would be a bigger part of the story.*

Reactions: Most fully-formed dreams feature details where the dreamer reacts to the story or the story reacts to the dreamer like a *choose your own adventure*. Decisions made while dreaming affect how the story unfolds. In this case, the dreamer reacts to the idea of cheating by making "not cheating" an implied prerequisite before hooking up. What does the dream really mean by that? We'll find out in Step 2.

A simple question begs to be asked: how do you (the guy who had the dream) feel about the idea of cheating with some other guy's girlfriend? The question needs to be answered in the context of the story. In the dream he agrees to hook up because he thinks the girl broke up with her boyfriend. Subconsciously he knows what the dream really means, that's why answering the question in context is so important. The implication is he wouldn't cheat. The distinction is important. You'll know why in a moment.

He's upset when he finds out the girl cheated. That reaction is based on subconsciously knowing what cheating really means, and it provides a clue that something at the heart of the dream upset him, or the idea of it upsets him.

Resolution: The dream has no content that suggests a resolution. At this point we can't take the other road to resolution, which is to find the moral of the story, because we don't know what the dream means.

In this dream the narrative components are more heavily in play because the basic story is told through the idea of cheating, an action. In the story, cheating is used in the relationship sense—the dreamer hooks up with a girl who is cheating on her boyfriend, but he thinks he's in the clear—and in his life the cheating happened in another sense.

During the process of interpreting the symbolism and analyzing the story in Step 2 I got to the bottom of the dream by understanding what cheating really means. Simple facts #2 and #3 about dreams tell us that dreams are stories told using symbolism. Cheating is symbolism, and it's used in the context of a story where the dreamer thinks he isn't cheating when the deed is done.

If you had this dream, how would you form questions based on these observations and trace it all back your recent memories? I'm about to show you how I do it.

[Dive Deeper: [Interpret Sex Dreams](#)]

## *Step 2: Interpret and Analyze*

### **Interpret the symbolism**

In Step 2 you use tools for interpreting dream symbolism: associate, simplify, and amplify. For this dream, simplify comes in handy. To simplify, summarize the dream or a detail of it as simply as possible. Then form a question:

***"Did something happen recently in my life where I was told I could do something, I did it, then***

### ***found out it was wrong?"***

That's how I translated the story of hooking up, thinking it was OK at the time, then finding out later it was cheating.

I wasn't expecting the question to bulls-eye on the first try, but it did. Simplifying doesn't always get me where I want to go, but for good reason it's one of my four keys for quick dream analysis you will learn about later. Now I'm going to jump ahead to Step 3 and reveal the dream's meaning, then return the discussion to the other half of Step 2: analyze the story.

### ***Step 3: Connect and Reflect***

The guy who experienced the dream and shared it at reddit.com resonated with my question. The dream's simple idea points right at the memory from the previous day where he used notes while taking a test and the teacher caught him and accused him of cheating. For the longest moment of his life it looked like he was in real trouble. But because the teacher knew him to be a good student, she accepted his defense that he thought he was allowed to use notes during the test.

In the dream he believes wrong information that leads to cheating, and in his waking life he believes wrong information that leads to him being accused of cheating. The parallel between his dream and his waking world is obvious. We can now connect all the dream's detail around the central idea of cheating.

The story provides context to understand what cheating really means—it's something he wouldn't do deliberately—and so does the personal life of the guy who *experiences* the dream. You could say that the

dream is a re-experience of the event that happened, presented as a story told using symbolism.

In the final step of the interpretation, the dreamer reflects on what's happening in his life and easily finds the source material the dream draws from to tell the story. He works through the D3 steps, and now the dream makes sense.

During Step 2 you can use the interpretation tools associate and amplify to interpret the symbolism, but those tools aren't needed for this dream. We see it's based on a recent memory of an event that happened in his outer life, and simplify is how we form the question that leads to the source memories and ultimately to the dream's meaning.

### **Analyze the story**

Cheating tells the story. It's an action, a narrative component. The dream creates the meaning by comparing one kind of cheating to another. As part of story analysis you search a dream for use of comparison and contrast.

In this example you need to know what happened in the young man's life to identify that cheating in the relationship sense is compared with cheating on a test. It's not obvious just by reading his description of his dream, but my experience with dream interpretation gave me a strong hunch that the dream used cheating as a comparison with a related idea. I went searching and lucked out by finding the parallel with his life so quickly. You now know to always be on the lookout for the use of comparison. Comparison of one kind or another is the primary way dreams embed meaning in their stories.

Interpreting a dream is a bit like playing the game Pin the Tail on the Donkey. You have information in hand

from the memories of your dream or a description provided by the dreamer. Then you search for where the information belongs. With practice you gain an internal sense of direction. You're not blind, you just have to use other senses to see beyond the obvious. You feel your way along and trust your intuition. The meaning is hidden, but it is also in plain sight once you know how to interpret symbolism and analyze the story. Dreams do not disguise their meaning as Sigmund Freud claimed. They speak a language you must learn. And fortunately, it's a language that comes naturally with practice.

The comparison between relationship cheating and test cheating is a type of metaphor, and identifying metaphor is also a tool for story analysis. The third tool, exaggeration, does not reveal anything about this dream's story.

Reaction is another narrative component, and it's clearly identifiable when the dreamer is upset after he inadvertently gets into a situation that involves cheating. Now we know the real reason why he's upset—he really did inadvertently get into a situation that involved an accusation of cheating. He could be a person who'd never cheat or be involved in cheating in the relationship sense. But based on what we know about the event behind the dream, his reaction during the dream is related to the accusation of cheating on a test.

Resolution is not in the dream's story, but it's easily found in the moral of the story: make sure you have the right information before doing something that could get you in trouble if you're wrong!

[Dive Deeper: [Cheating in a dream](#) isn't what it appears to be, usually]

Clearly, this dream resulted from the dreaming mind translating a memory to symbolic imagery. It's based on an event in his outer life.

Inner life is more frequently spotlighted in dreams, for most people most of the time. Inner life dreams tend to vibrate deeper and punch harder. Dreams about deepest inner life are distinctive for their felt sense of importance and oftentimes fantastic and highly metaphorical stories. By contrast, the story of Bad Hookup is pretty straightforward and closer to the sort of story we hear about in everyday life.

I use the categories "outer life" and "inner life" as initial roads of inquiry into a dream. Is the dream based on something that happened in outer life? If so, the source is probably easier to find in those memories. Bad Hookup is as clearly related to an event in outer life as you're likely to find.

In Step 3 you reflect on what's happening in your life. Most dreams are created around memories from the past day or two, so during Step 3, after interpreting the symbolism and analyzing the story, you reflect and find the parallels between your waking life and dreaming life. When a dream story reminds you more of everyday life, look first to outer life for the source memories. When a dream ventures towards fantasy, look first to inner life.

As a dream interpreter I begin by asking simple questions, then pinch myself when they lead to the source of the dream in the memories of recent events—probably the bigger and more important events—of outer life. The parallels are easy to see after translating the symbolism and story. Bad Hookup is such a case. Dreams are deeply personal experiences, and I

continually remind myself that it's amazing I know anything about them that's useful for anyone but me.

Everything in your dreams is a projection of inner life some way or another. On one end of the spectrum you have inner life memories, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, and on the other end you find psyche and spirit, the center and roots of our lives as conscious beings. Those dreams are harder to decipher, especially when you're looking in from the outside. Simple questions aren't as helpful usually, but it's always helpful to ask them. I make it sound easy, but dream interpretation is rarely as easy as 'answer the question and presto!'

I have encountered many dream interpretations that are unnecessarily complex. They speculate grandly about hidden feelings, secret desires, and complex processes occurring in the netherworld of the psyche. The people who receive these interpretations often feel confused or worse. Then I come along and point out the simple, oftentimes obvious meaning (obvious once you know what to look for). Like in our demonstration, the guy who experienced the dream could wonder if there's a defect in his character which would lead him to cheat. But no, the dream actually points to a strength in his character. He's NOT a cheater in ANY sense of the word.

Dreams can address outer and inner life simultaneously, too. In fact, that's their usual M.O. They start with what's happening in your outer life, business as usual, then turn more imaginary and fantastical when they show your inner life reactions to the happenings of outer life.

When interpreting your dreams, look for any reference to an outer life event and follow the trail if you find it.

For example, if the place where you work is the setting of a dream, or a co-worker is in it, look first at your recent memories from work, if any.

If a dream places you in a room of your house and tells a story there, look first for any memories that might have formed the previous day while in that room.

There's more to it, but begin there.

Look not only at events in outer life, but also the thoughts, emotions, feelings, perceptions and so forth of inner life. As you will see in the next demonstration, inner life is woven into almost all dreams.

Apply that lesson to anything in your dreams that correlates with your waking life, not only the imagery but the situations and scenarios—you are likely to find parallels.

That's how you interpret the above dream by finding its source in the situation involving an accusation of cheating. Explain all the details of a dream in context and your job is done... for now. Dreams layer the meaning, and even once you accurately interpret one layer, the passage of time can reveal more.

This demonstration shows you how to take the three simple facts and three simple steps of my D3 interpretation process and apply them. We will continue building atop this foundation in the next demo.

- ***"Side Lesson: Search online for the term ["Ghosts of Illness Past"](#) Dream." It's at my blog [Dreams123.net](#). It's a fascinating look at how a dream incorporated the memory of something that registered subconsciously with the dreamer. It's also another"" example of a memory crafted a symbolic story, heavily***



***influenced by a recent event in the person's  
outer life."***

# Demo #2: How to Interpret Dreams

## *Interpret a dream about driving out of control*

Students of my [Advanced Dream Interpretation](#) course at Dream School have heard my lesson on how to decipher a dream about driving out of control. Begin with the symbolism of driving and find out how it modifies the symbolism of the vehicle. The vehicle symbolizes something, and the action of driving tells the fuller story. From that starting point, a dream story can go in a million different directions to create symbolism and meaning.

Start with the vehicle. It's a symbol in a dream. Add the action of losing control while driving it. Let's say the vehicle represents your emotions. What does losing control of the vehicle mean? A dream communicates the idea of losing control of emotions by showing loss of control of the vehicle.

Dreams are endlessly creative with stringing together ideas expressed as symbols. For this demo, #2 in RadOwl's Crash Course in Dream Interpretation, let's walk through how a dream can string together ideas and tell a deeply meaningful and personal story. We will use a dream that features driving and losing control, and while this demo is taken from a dream I helped to interpret at Reddit Dreams, I ask you to pretend it's your dream:

Title: **Rescuing Mom**

- ***"I'm in the passenger seat of my mom's truck. She's behind the wheel. We're driving along an icy***

***road. Mom drives off the road and onto a frozen lake. The ice breaks and the truck starts to sink."***

There's more to the dream we'll get to later. First I want to show you what's going through my mind already as I help this young man with his dream. Of course there's the symbolism of mom driving the truck off the road and getting the two of them into a jam. We'll get around to understanding that part. At this point I'm wondering how much of this dream is based on reality for the dreamer.

Dreams *tend* to bring in details from outer life when they speak to something related to it, so the place to begin interpreting the dream is by asking what's going on with mom. Is the character that represents her in the dream based on reality of how she really is in waking life? If so, it means outer life is where we are likely to find the raw material the dream uses to create the story. The dreamer says the portrayal of his mom as a character is accurate in a sense. You'll see why in a few moments.

If the dreamer said the way his mom is portrayed is not at all like her, or if mom in the dream is a fictional character playing the role, I'd begin by looking for parallels with the dreamer's inner life. Inner life is involved in all dreams—they are created in your imagination and reflect your inner world—but it helps during the interpretation process—especially at the beginning—to know how much or to what degree the story is sourced internally or externally. What's fictional and what's based on reality. When dreams are heavily fictional, the more likely source is inner life. And when they replicate waking reality, the more likely source is outer life. This is a tendency, a place to begin.

Now we continue with the story the dream tells.

Mixing reality with fiction, it puts mom behind the wheel of her own truck when she loses control and it plunges off an icy road and into a frozen lake. Let's pretend it's you in this scene. Next:

*I rescue mom from the sinking truck and swim to shore. Then I admonish her for her awful driving.*

Those details about mom driving her own vehicle and losing control suggest the idea that in some way *she* is out of control, not you, and outer life provides at least some of the raw material for this dream. Otherwise, assume that mom is a projection of something about you, and her actions in the dream are a reflection of you, not her.

With these observations in mind, we're ready to plunge into the interpretation.

## *What is the meaning of this dream*

As a dream interpreter I now know where to begin asking questions. The dream's details constellate around the central idea that mom is out of control, and we've established that the dream is based, to some extent, on reality.

You find the central idea in Step 3, but you're keeping an eye out for it from the get-go. Simple facts #2 and #3 inform us that the dream is a story told using symbolism. In the D3 process, we interpret the symbolism and analyze the story in Step 2, so let's work that step and test our hypothesis.

[Step 2, Interpret Symbolism:](#) Use D3 to guide the questioning process and the spotlight shines on the action of rescuing mom. You perform that action as an actor in the story following a script written subconsciously. The action is symbolic. Action is a

narrative component of dream stories, something you note in Step 1 when you identify the story elements—settings, characters, and symbols—and narrative components—actions, reactions, and resolution.

You need to know what the action of rescuing means symbolically. If you can interpret the symbolism of what it means to rescue mom, it's likely to provide the info needed to understand what the dream means by showing her out of control while driving her truck.

Also, what does your reaction really say about the underlying meaning when you criticize her driving? Simple fact #1 is you know subconsciously what the dream means. You react based on it. Keep that in mind as we continue.

- *Side note: You could say that rescuing mom is just something you're supposed to do. Of course you're going to rescue her, but dreams play by their own rules. Rescuing mom could be scripted for the story, and you perform the action like an actor told to play out the scene. But you want to ask if you have a choice. Reactions based on choice are often deeply revealing about the feelings and other personal dynamics involved in the dream. This dream has good reason to depict mom's behavior the way it does, and once you understand the reason for it, you understand why the dreamer rescues her then admonishes her bad driving.*

[Step 2, Story Analysis:](#) In the story, mom's bad driving leads to you rescuing her, so we can surmise that her driving and the rescue interrelate. They are ideas expressed as symbolic actions and strung together to tell the story. By analyzing the story it becomes apparent that scene one, where mom drives off the

road, leads to the action of rescuing her in scene two. This clue leads us to explore whether the dream's source can be found in how *mom's decisions impact you*, and how you respond. Story analysis helps us to find the parallels between the dream and waking life.

The story is set up to spark your reactions and feelings. Your feelings, which show in your reactions, are based on knowing subconsciously what it all means—now we're back to simple fact #1. You as the dreamer react by rescuing mom, and in this case the personal reasons run deeper than mere role-playing. In other words, the reason for rescuing her is deeply personal and meaningful, and it's the key to understanding the story.

Let's say that rescuing mom means bailing her out after she gets in another mess. She makes one bad decision after another. Bad decision-making, shown in the story driving off the road and causing an emergency, is a simple way of summing up the story. Now "rescue" takes on a new meaning. It's shown literally in the dream as rescuing her from drowning but is meant figuratively. When the figurative meaning is understood, the reaction of admonishing her driving is understood as saying she's a bad decision-maker and her life is a wreck. She's a bad driver because she's a bad decision-maker.

Now we can say that rescuing her is a fact of life. It's the personal context needed to understand the meaning behind the symbolic action. Context connects the dots. It's the glue that holds together the story, as you'll see later in Step 3.

Next we're going to walk a mile in the dreamer's shoes. We're going to switch perspective to the young man who had the dream, with a lesson learned that you picture a dream as your own while helping someone

else interpret theirs. He says that his mom is a bad decision-maker and he, as her son, is often forced into a position of having to rescue her. It's a pattern. Now we know how the dream tells a story about this young man's reality.

**A**s an exercise in story analysis let's say the young man decides to break the pattern of rescuing mom. That decision could show in the dream as the story playing out differently. The opening scene remains the same. Mom drives off the road and they plunge into the frozen lake. But when the story reaches the point where he is supposed to rescue her, he could react instead by tossing her a life vest and saying rescue yourself.

It's a way of saying he's tired of rescuing her and doesn't want to continue doing it. He breaks the pattern of coming to the rescue, and his decision is integrated deep into himself. It's a natural part of the dreaming process to integrate our daily experiences of life and test ourselves in the dream's virtual reality to find out what we really think and feel. Patterns are often broken first in dreams before broken in waking life.

But in this case the dreamer is the dutiful son, and the personal context explains why he reacts the way he does—he's acting out the story based on subconscious knowledge of what the dream means. He's a character in the story and plays the role of rescuer. Because that's what he does. He rescues his mom. Habitually.

The dream encapsulates the situation with mom and is not based on specific memories. I call these "week in review dreams." Unlike our first demo where the dream's details all connect with a specific event where the dreamer was accused of cheating on a test, this

demo shows how a dream's details sum up circumstances and conditions which have developed over a span of time.

- *To interpret dream symbolism you think of it as a [language](#) and translate it. Dream language embeds information in the symbols, and the symbols string together to convey more complex ideas. This dream is a great example.*

## Work Backwards

**W**e want to make sure all the dream's details fit together in a big picture, part of Step 3: Connect and Reflect. If any detail doesn't fit, our hypothesis about the meaning could be inaccurate. In a later chapter I'll provide you with more ways to tell if a dream interpretation is accurate.

The icy road, for example, is a detail deliberately chosen because it's a metaphor for the general circumstances of daily life with mom. They travel a "slippery road" together. An icy road is a slippery one. It's a picture that says a thousand words, and it's a detail that fits in the big picture of the dream. [Hunting for metaphors](#) in the dream story is part of Step 2: Story Analysis.

The dream makes the son a passenger because he's along for the crazy ride of life with mom, the decision-maker. She's behind the proverbial wheel. She has control.

But she doesn't really have control, and the dream expresses the idea through losing control of not just any vehicle, it's the one she drives in daily life. The dream could have shown her driving a different vehicle but



didn't, which suggests to me that it chose this detail to parallel their waking reality. It's a clue that the dream is based more on external circumstances than internal ones.

With a tweak to the story the dreaming mind can string together different ideas embedded in the dream symbols and communicate a different meaning. For example, if mom drives *dad's car* off the road, in the right context it could communicate the idea that she's being careless with their relationship or his feelings.

Or it could say symbolically that a mom aspect inside the dreamer is interfering somehow with a dad aspect. We internalize the important people in our lives, and those internalized images take form as dream characters. Mom driving out of control could just as well show what's happening internally in the dreamer's psyche, instead of externally in his life with mom. It could be wrong to assume that mom in the dream has anything to do with mom in reality. This is an important lesson for understanding the nature of dream characters. Looks can be deceiving.

While interpreting this dream I explored other possibilities for meaning. Always do so—it helps you to avoid jumping to wrong conclusions. Plus, dreams are layered with meaning and can point simultaneously to several areas of life. But in this dream the details all point toward the dreamer's life with his mom and how it impacts him personally.

Every detail constellates around the core idea that driving means control, driving out of control means mom lacks control of her life, and rescuing her is a fact of life for her son. Let's take it from the top and go step by step to see if there's anything else we can learn.

- **Step 1: Story Elements and Narrative Components**

- Settings: inside the truck together, the lake, the shoreline.
- Characters: mom, son.
- Symbols: icy road, the truck, being a passenger
- Actions: driving, rescuing
- Reactions: rescuing mom then admonishing her
- Resolution: TBD

- **Step 2: Interpret and Analyze**

We have identified the story elements and narrative components. Now we can take them to Step 2, to interpret the symbolism and analyze the story. It sets you up for Step 3 when you connect the details in context and reflect on your life.

Settings: We understand what mom's truck represents symbolically and how it's used in the story.

I think the lake is most important to the story for setting up the scene for the dreamer to rescue mom and himself and act out the symbolism. You could also say that his mom is *on thin ice*, and where else do you find thin ice than over a frozen lake?

The significance of the shoreline doesn't appear to extend beyond its use as part of the story about rescuing mom. But if this was your dream, during the interpretation process you'd use interpretation tools such as [associate](#) and [amplify](#) to test if there's deeper meaning to that imagery. A dream could use a shoreline as a setting to express an idea such as coming to a place of acceptance or calm about the situation with mom. The place in question is figurative; it's within the dreamer's thoughts and feelings. His dreams shows it as a setting, a place. The shore could symbolize the idea

in the phrase “made it to shore,” meaning something has come to completion. Every detail of a dream is tested and analyzed in this way for the potential for meaning.

Characters: mom and son. Mom as a dream character is subjectively portrayed based on the dreamer’s thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. He thinks she’s out of control, and he’s probably right. He is a character in the story, too, and he symbolically acts out the same role of rescuer that he plays in her life.

Symbols: Mom’s truck is brought into the dream deliberately to mean the subject is about how she handles her daily life, with her son as a passenger along for the ride. The icy road conveys the idea of treacherous conditions on the road of life.

Actions: The meaning is obvious now that we know what driving and rescuing mean. The action—and how it translates as metaphorical symbolism—is the primary route for interpreting the dream. Which is usually the case.

Reactions: The reason why he admonishes his mom is apparent. He knows subconsciously what’s really going on in the dream, simple fact #1. He’s really speaking to how she handles her life, not her driving (though maybe she’s really a bad driver, too).

Resolution: Resolution is the trickiest part of a dream to interpret because sometimes it’s found in the dream content and other times through the implications of it. Sometimes the story is “to be continued,” and I think the son’s drama with his mom is ongoing. The dream provides him with the perfect metaphor for summing up the situation. What he does from there is up to him.

- **Step 3: Connect and Reflect**

We have all the info we need to connect the dots and view them in context. We see how every detail connects symbolically or story-wise with the central idea of losing control. No loose ends. The interpretation is as accurate as I can make it.

However, the ultimate proof comes from the dreamer himself. He knows subconsciously what the dream means, and my interpretation resonates strongly with him. The dream describes his life to a T. He feels a ding of recognition when the dream is correctly understood.

Personal context is the lens through which you always view a dream. I can't tell you how many times I've reminded people of this fact after they dream about a big disaster like an earthquake or a war—they tend to think it's going to come true on a collective level. Only in exceptionally rare instances have I found this to be true. Instead, dreams almost always speak to what's happening with you personally.

The story of the dream provides context too, because it shows you how the symbols are defined. It works the same as understanding words in context of a sentence. If the word "spring" is used in a sentence, you know through context whether it means to jump, to release from captivity, the season, or some other definition of it. If I say "spring," how do you know what I really mean? That's why context matters. This demo says "control" in the context of losing control of a vehicle, and it really means control of one's life. And it says "rescue" in the context of rescuing his mom from her sinking truck, and it really means coming to the rescue after she slips up.

That's a lot of information packed into a few symbols and symbolic actions, and that's the nature of dream symbolism.

Also, we've covered a lot of ground with Demos #1 and #2. I hope you're catching on. Now we can run through more demos and really have some fun with this learning process.

You really can understand and interpret your dreams using the three-step D3 process. It's exciting when you catch on.

Demo #3 is waiting for you when you're ready.

# Demo #3: How to Interpret Dreams

## *Tracing dreams to their source in outer life*

The foundation for interpreting your dreams is now built, and the next two dreams we interpret as part of RadOwl's Crash Course in Dream Interpretation will add to it. The territory we're in is still outer life dreams, but we look for connections with inner life, too. Here we go.

Title: **Fighting For Control of My Car**

- ***"I dream that I'm driving my car at high speed in a sharp curve of the highway. I look over and a group of contractors are alongside me in a truck like the one they use at the work site. One of them reaches through my window and tries to take control of the steering wheel. I fend him off while barely managing to stay on the road."***

Control. Here's another example of how *one sense of the word acted out in the dream is meant in another sense*. The story occurs in and around the two vehicles on a highway, and is told primarily through the symbolic actions, a narrative component identified during Step 1 so it can be interpreted and analyzed in Step 2.

Driving at high speed is an action.

Grabbing for the steering wheel is an action.

Barely staying on the road is metaphorical symbolism expressed through action.

Control. We see the idea expressed symbolically through multiple details. It's the dream's central idea, and it connects the dots. The idea is expressed in the actions of fighting for control of the dreamer's steering wheel, and in the dreamer trying to control the vehicle as it speeds through a curve. So that's where we begin the dream interpretation process. Make initial observations, then walk the steps of D3.

When two or more details of a dream point the same direction symbolically, like in our example where you see the idea of fighting for control expressed two different ways, it is likely to be a route to the dream's meaning. In conventional dream experiences all the details connect together through the symbolism and the story.

We need go step by step through this dream to interpret it, but I'm going to reveal the personal context first and the question I used to find it. Why does the dream choose the group of contractors from the man's work life as antagonist characters? It's deliberate, and answering the question is how I bridge the distance between the idea of control and what's happening in his life that's dramatized by his dream.

The contractors are people he actually knows from waking life. They're not imaginary, and the dream chooses to put them in a truck like the one the dreamer sees them in at the work site where he's the project manager and they work for him.

Outer life. That's where the story context and personal context are leading us. We're applying Step 3—*connect the dots in context*—to Step 1, the dream's *elements and components*. Now we know we're looking at outer life first for the source of the dream and the memories he's processing. Then we can examine his inner life for

how he's reacting. There's no guarantee of course. Dreams are known to defy expectations, and you want to avoid being hasty. But I can tell you after thousands of times going through this process that there are times when you can shortcut right to the meaning.

What's happening at work that involves the contractors in the man's dream and the idea of fighting for control of something? That's the question to ask based on the simple idea behind the symbolic meaning of fighting the contractors over control of the dreamer's steering wheel. It's *his* steering wheel, something he's in control of.

...Or barely in control, judging by how he's shown as already in a high-speed curve when the contractors come into the scene. It's a perfect summation of his work life at the moment. He's running a big construction project, racing to meet a deadline, and barely managing to keep it on course. On top of that, contractors are trying to tell *him* how *they* should do their jobs, in particular the group shown in the dream. If he gives them an inch, they'll take a mile.

When we understand that the dream is about a battle for control and look first at his work life for the source, it's easy for him to identify what the dream is dramatizing.

All the details connect:

The highway setting symbolizes the fast pace of the work project.

Navigating the tight curve at high speed is a metaphor; any slip at this point could spell disaster.

Driving the car symbolizes the direction he's going in his life at the present time. The dream puts him behind the wheel of *his* car, not an imaginary one. It's a clue



gained through story analysis that leads us to explore memories related to recent happenings in his work life.

The steering wheel is a symbol for ability to control the situation.

The contractors are chosen by the dream as characters because the situation involves them.

He's a character in the story, too, playing the role of driver. He's controlling his personal direction, but also the direction of the project he's managing.

The action of battling for control of the steering wheel is a snapshot that captures the central idea of the dream.

### **Step 1 Revisited: Resolution**

After working through the dream and understanding what it says symbolically, I ask the project manager how he thinks he should respond. The dream does not make his decisions for him. It presents him with the information he needs to make his own decisions. He says, "I better get a handle on this situation before shit gets out of control!" The next morning at the job site he's ready. He creates resolution by cracking down hard on the contractors. Not just the one group from his dream—that group represents all of them.

Inner life comes into the picture when he analyzes his feelings about the situation and pays attention to the little voice in his head warning him about the potential for the project to spin out of control. He's been so busy and focused that he hasn't slowed down to fully process everything. Dreams are known for providing such opportunities. The part of the mind that creates dreams—the unconscious—is always observing. And like a great coach it let's us do things our way and only intervenes when necessary. Then it takes all the

situational and personal dynamics involved and turns them into a dramatic story that gets our attention.

## Dressed for the part but not acting it

That title sums up the following dream:

- ***"I dream that I'm dressed as a cop when I see a crime being committed. I decide to look the other way and do nothing about it."***

**I**n the story the dreamer is dressed for the part of law enforcement but chooses to ignore a crime. Symbolically, it could point towards his outer life or inner life.

When I begin the dream interpretation process I have no hints or clues that help me pick up the scent trail, unlike the previous demos where initial observations provide a place to begin.

My initial suggestion to him is to reflect on the past day or two and search his memory for anything that can be described as looking the other way from something wrong going down.

The dream adds to the story by saying that he not only looks the other way, he does so when he has the power to act or enforce. That's the implication of being dressed in a police officer's uniform.

Enforcement power is a broad term and you want to think about it figuratively. We're not just talking about enforcing laws. For example, a promise has enforcement power behind it. When you make a promise there's a social contract to keep it. If you break

your promise, you are, in a sense, looking the other way. If someone breaks a promise they make to you, you have the power and even the obligation to call them out. Failing to do so could be represented symbolically as being dressed as a cop and ignoring a crime. I teach this lesson to the guy who had the dream, and...

Bulls-eye!

The dream is brief and so was the moment in his waking life when he looked over during a licensing exam for his profession and saw someone cheating. The thought crossed his mind that he should report it, but he decided against it. *Hey, if someone cheats, that's their business. And the job of catching cheats is for the test-givers.* That's how he reasoned it.

He had the power to report the cheating and chose not to use it. The dream is a view into the processing of the memories. The moment in time was important, and the decision he made is now part of him. The integration happens neurologically and psychologically as he's dreaming. It's why the dream disturbed him enough to seek help understanding it. He stepped back from how he saw himself react in the dream and said *wait a minute, that's not the usual me.*

But it is now.

Reactions. They say so much without having to actually say anything at all. Notice them. Analyze them. They're part of the story and important to the meaning, and they're based on what you know subconsciously about what's truly happening in your dream.

## *Uniforms and Roles*

The [roles you play in your dreams](#) are likely to parallel the roles you play in life. You know by now that

everything in dreams is purposeful, so you want find out why a dream places you in certain roles.

The role of police officer is kind of easy to identify because it involves a uniform, but you can play roles that don't involve uniforms. We analyzed an example of this in Demo #2. The young man plays the role of rescuing his mom from her sinking truck. In his waking life he plays the role of rescuing her from her bad decisions.

The police uniform presents another possibility for symbolism and personal significance. The guy who had the dream had once wanted to be a cop, and that's the sort of personal association and context you explore during D3's interpretation process.

But wearing the uniform really means he had the power to play the role of enforcer if he'd wanted to. Notice that he actually wears the uniform, another detail pointing toward the central idea of power to take action if one chooses. Police uniform equals power, symbolically. When you step into the uniform, you also step into the role and assume the power.

### **Interpret symbolism: associate, simplify, amplify**

The uniform can potentially convey ideas like "narc" and "busted," too. Those words could spontaneously come to mind during Step 2 when you make associations with the story elements and narrative components. If the guy who had the dream chose to report the cheater, he is in a sense a *narc*. The cheater is *busted*. He could make associations, and if the words narc or busted come to mind they could provide clues for him to search his memory and remember the cheating he witnessed during the exam.

In this demo we [simplify](#) to see the simple idea behind the dream: looking the other way. The guy who had the

dream could search his recent memory for anything that fits that description and remember what he witnessed during the exam.

Identifying and understanding why dreams amplify helps us know why the dreamer gave himself this experience. Dreams amplify to get our attention. This dream amplifies the personal importance of the decision he made to ignore cheating rather than report it. It's a turning point for him. In times past he would have narked. The dream amplifies so he won't miss the importance. That's why the dream focuses more on the personal significance rather than the event itself.

Both of the dreams in this demo draw source material from specific memories but focus on the personal significance of them. Memory processing occurs, but the dreams are more accurately described as psychological digestion. That's a common pattern of dream life. Dreams often begin with what's happening in your outer life, then bring to light how it affects you internally.

In a way, we're always talking about inner life when we trace our dreams back to their source. Dreams are your inner world projected out like a movie for you to watch or star in. It's the story of your life day by day. Dreams are created internally and are subjective, except in unconventional dreams that feature objective information and perceptions.

Some dreams come out of the blue, seemingly. Recent memories can be involved, but the source is deeper and more personal, and in our next demo we will learn how to trace it.

# Demo #4: How to Interpret Dreams

## *Dreams mix outer and inner life*

**B**y getting this far in RadOwl's Crash Course you have the tools and information you need to recognize the features and landmarks along dream interpretation road. You see how dreams take your experiences and turn them into symbolism and story. You see memories, thoughts, ideas, and feelings turned into metaphorical imagery. In the experience of the dream, you find the personal significance and message. In the details, you find the signs to follow to trace the source of the dream to outer life and inner life.

Dream content drawn from outer life usually correlates with it by featuring familiar people, places, and other aspects of daily reality. Usually, but not always. Dreams can tell imaginary stories about events that happen and especially about the personal impact.

Think back to Demo #3 when the man dressed as a cop chooses to ignore a crime. We followed the clues to his memory of choosing to ignore cheating during an exam. The dream doesn't feature anything from outer life that overtly points that direction. It makes no mention of the exam where he witnessed cheating. Instead, we find the dream's source memories presented metaphorically and focused more on how he reacted. The dream occurs soon after the experience, raising the likelihood to almost certain that related memories are being processed in the brain and translated to symbolic imagery while dreaming.

*Trace the dream back to its source*

With dream interpretation, things are rarely as they appear, and what appears to source from one area of life actually could be from a different area, or be only one layer of meaning and personal significance among several. If the dream is like a river, the watershed is many sources scattered throughout the dreamer's personal landscape.

The recipe for the standard dream is to mix outer life with inner life, first by showing a feature of outer life in symbolic or direct form, then showing the reaction in your inner world—everything from how you react in your feelings, to how you reconfigure yourself from the brain down to adapt to circumstances.

Differentiating outer life from inner life in dream content can be trickier than I've demonstrated for you, for all the previous reasons mentioned and more. When you interpret a dream you are entering the territory of a part of yourself that knows more than you do (consciously) and sees from the perspective of the collective experience of our species going back to its origins. It has no blind spots or ego turf. And it's rarely predictable enough for us to establish hard rules for dream interpretation.

For differentiating dream content, my rule of hand is to look for imaginary elements and situations during Step 2 and gauge how far the dream ranges away from waking reality and over to fantasy land. Fantasy is the underpinning of inner life. Inner life is where I first investigate highly imaginary elements and situations in dreams—where I question and seek answers and apply the D3 Steps. And the further into fantasy a dream ranges, the further it is likely to dig into the core of you, the deepest inner heart and spirit, to syphon out the raw material, the fodder.

Here's where the interpretation process requires even more closely examining each scene and each detail and examining yourself to find the source of it. In the coming

demos where inner life plays a greater role, we find at first a mix of outer life and inner life. Then we'll move farther along the spectrum towards dreams that are more imaginary and based on inner life. Remember that dream interpretation has no hard rules, and the best any interpretation process can offer is guidelines based on tendencies.

You already know how it works. In Demo #2 we dissected the dream about the mom driving out of control and found the source in the dreamer's outer life with his mom. The dream gets more imaginary as it expresses his feelings and perceptions through the imagery of mom plunging her truck into an icy lake and him rescuing her. The story follows the pattern of first showing what's happening in outer life and using everyday details and storyline to do it. He's the passenger in a truck with his mom as she drives down the road. Business as usual, everyday life. Then by showing the truck run off the road and putting the dreamer into an imaginary rescue scenario, it dramatizes how the dreamer responds in his inner life.

Keep in mind the observation that dreams are known for showing how you react internally to what happens in your life externally. It's about to come in handy as you step up your game and interpret the next dream along with me.

## Poisoning My Beloved Dog

*What Did I Just Do?!*

- ***"In my dream my mom tells me I have to poison my pet dog, the dog I love more than anything. I don't want to do it, but she persists and comes up with some reason I can't refuse. So I pour poison in my dog's kibbles and watch her eat. She gets***



***weak and lays down, and soon after she dies in my arms. I realize what a terrible thing I've done and lose my mind with fury. I scream at my mom for making me do this, and punch her in the face over and over as hard as I can. She just laughs. I storm out of the bedroom and into the living room where members of my extended family are sitting around. I tell them my mom made me kill my dog, but they tell me I'm overreacting."***

- *A dream shared at Reddit*

**T**he opening scene of a dream is often the place in the story to find the central idea or subject. Do you see clues in this opener where the dreamer is convinced by her mom to poison her pet?

What is the dream really saying?

Where do you begin interpreting?

Think about it.

## **Story Elements**

*Settings: bedroom, living room*

Begin with the bedroom [setting](#), Step 1, the first story element. Why does the dream open the story in the bedroom?

It could be because of a bedroom's symbolism for something close and personal. Bedrooms are personal spaces. The dream purposefully chooses the bedroom setting to open the story, so to find the meaning we're looking for something close and personal to the dreamer.

That's my initial hunch, and since I already know what the dream means, consider this a verified clue. The

source of the dream is found in very close and personal feelings and context. The opening scene points that direction, and we keep it in mind while walking through the rest of the interpretation. Later I'll explain the significance of the living room as a setting.

*Characters: mom, dreamer, pet dog, family members*

What does mom represent in this dream? Is the portrayal of her accurate, or imaginary? You might say that mom appears to be a horrible bitch in reality and you might be right, but you can't make that assumption or any assumption when helping someone interpret their dream. Look for how closely the dream's portrayal matches with reality, whether objectively (she really is a bitch), or subjectively (the dreamer perceives her that way), or not at all.

I've helped to interpret dreams where parental figures do horrible things, then find out that the parent in question is an awesome human and nothing like the portrayal in the dream. At least, not overtly. For example, a teenage girl dreams about her father kidnapping her, holding her captive and confessing that he's madly in love with her. It makes you wonder if dad is right in the head. Come to find out, he's just overprotective, and his teenage daughter feels like he's holding her captive in a sense with his strict rules, and he does it because of overzealous love for her. On the other hand, he might say he's just doing what every good father should do.

Dad's portrayal is subjectively based on her feelings and perceptions, and in an exaggerated way it's accurate, but still subjective. Dad is not a kidnapper, he's not holding his daughter captive, and he's not

madly in love with her. These details of the dream are exaggerations of the dreamer's perceptions, and searching a dream for exaggeration is part of Step 2: Story Analysis. Is the portrayal of the mom in the dream we're analyzing exaggerated?

First though, if the portrayal of the dreamer's mom is accurate, not exaggerated or imaginary, we focus on recent events and interactions the dreamer has had with her mom and the current state of their relationship. Either way, as a dream interpreter you encourage her to talk about her thoughts and feelings about her mom. It could lead to finding the dream's source material, and the dream content strongly suggests that her relationship with her mom is an entry point for understanding the personal dynamics at play. There might not be a specific memory, situation, or event behind it. Instead, the dream might be a summation. Or it might use the opportunity presented by a recent situation or event to tell a broader story.

But if the portrayal is exaggerated and imaginary, the dream is more likely to be sourced in the dreamer's inner life. Mom would be better understood as representing a deep inner aspect of the dreamer. Or the exaggeration could dramatically express the dreamer's feelings and perceptions. After all, dreams are stories, and stories don't have to stick strictly to the truth. Sometimes stretching the truth paints a clearer picture of the personal and interpersonal dynamics.

You could make the same inference if the dreamer has had no recent interactions with her mom and hadn't been thinking about her. It means there are no direct source memories for processing while dreaming, so the next most likely possibility is mom as a character in the dream represents an aspect of the dreamer. Mom is a psychological imprint. This is almost always true to

some extent. Our job as dream interpreters is to find out *to what extent*.

The dreamer is a character too. She plays a role in the story. Why does she play along with mom's evil scheme to poison her dog? Why does she complain to her family members after raging at her mother for manipulating her to do it? The dream doesn't present a reason for her to turn to them right after her confrontation with her mom, but there is a reason and you'll find it out later. For now, I'm showing you how to analyze the story and formulate questions.

What does her pet dog mean to her, and what does poisoning it mean symbolically? The actions with the dog are central to the story and likely to be where we find the central idea. Context and the central idea are part of Step 3 of the D3 process, and we're already keeping an eye out for them in Step 1 when we break down the dream to identify story elements (settings, characters, symbols) and narrative components (actions, reactions, resolution).

The pet dog plays a role in the story so it's thought of as a dream character, and we need to know what it represents symbolically and as part of the story. You can help the dreamer figure it out by encouraging her to make associations: the thoughts, feelings, and memories that come to mind when she thinks about her pet. She might think of something spontaneously that has roots in her subconscious knowledge of what the dream means.

You can simplify the idea presented in the action of poisoning her pet and phrase it as a question such as, have you done harm recently to something you love? You can amplify the story by searching for parallels in literature and myth, such as Richmal Crompton's short

story *William's Birthday* where the protagonist's pet dog is taken away because, among other reasons, he unintentional causes his pets harm by feeding them the wrong food. The dreamer's situation could parallel the story of the book, and if her mom is the one pushing the wrong kibble on her it would explain why the dream has her mom push the action. The dream could be amplifying a fear that she's unintentionally poisoning her pet.

Now imagine being manipulated to poison something you love dearly. Step into the shoes of the dreamer to help her understand what her dream really means by picturing it as your own.

*Feel it.*

The family members present in the dream's final scene are understood as representing something symbolically as a group since they act together as a group. After she says her mom convinced her to kill her beloved dog, they say she's overreacting. Is she really? If so, how?

In the context of the story her reaction seems justified, and the reason is apparent once the dream is interpreted and traced to its source. Notice also that the family members are shown in the living room of the home. Is it because they're an active part of the dreamer's life and entangled in the dreamer's relationship—her "living situation"—with her mom? Is it because she and her pet dog share a roof with her mom, and her family life is a source of distress? Hmm...

I know the answers, and the questions I gave you to ask as a dream interpreter are ones you would ask simply based on what you can observe about the dream's story. However, if you were the dreamer or someone who knows her well, you would know firsthand that distress

in her family life is the driving force behind this dream. You'll see why in a moment.

### *Symbols: poison*

The dreamer as a character in the story pours poison on her dog's kibble. Is that a symbol, or a symbolic action? Poisoning is a verb that captures the meaning and is understood as a symbolic action.

### **Narrative Components**

#### *Actions: poisoning, dying*

How often do you see the word poisoning used to mean something other than malicious use of a toxic substance?

*Poisoning your mind. Poisoning your feelings.  
Poisoning your body.*

These figures of speech are rarely used literally, and dreams are rarely literal, so you always look for figurative meaning first. The woman who experienced the dream has a close relationship with her pet. She says it's her best friend. With that in mind, how do you describe the action of poisoning her dog? How about *poisoning a relationship*. The meaning is enacted, and it's easy to see if you're fluent in dream-speak.

You could form that observation as a question for the dreamer. Can you think of anything in your life recently that could be described as poisoning a relationship? As you'll see in a moment, that's the question that gets to the heart of the dream's meaning and its source memories.

Another question to ask is, what's died in the figurative sense? The dream chose to show the dog die instead of

just get sick or other possibilities (which are wide open since dreams don't follow normal logic). There must be a reason for it; every detail is purposeful. I call this process *reverse engineering the dream*. You think like a storyteller to gain insight by questioning why a dream presents the story the way it does.

Some details of dreams—and sometimes the entire story—are designed to spark a reaction, reveal your true thoughts and feelings, test you, and help you integrate what you learn. The symbolism isn't necessarily deep and the meaning isn't hidden. Instead the dream is best thought of as a virtual reality simulation. But in this case, the actions of poisoning and the dog dying really are deep and symbolic.

- *Side note: I walk you step by step through the D3 process beginning with Step 1, but there are times when I can't figure out a dream until far into the interpretation process. Then, by grasping the meaning of a detail or a scene I gain the master password. For the dream we're examining, understand what poisoning really means and it unlocks the meaning of the rest of the dream.*

### *Reactions: choosing to go along with mom's scheme, punching and screaming, her family's reaction*

The dream paints a scenario in the opening scene and presents the dreamer with the choice of going along with mom's scheme to poison her dog or saying no. The dreamer makes her choice, and it leads to the action of her pet dog dying. She knows subconsciously what's really happening here, simple fact #1, and her reaction

is driven by the fact that she made her choice already in waking life and is now *acting out the result*.

This means she doesn't really have a choice in this scene because she's an actor in the story, a character following a script written subconsciously. What appears at first to be a reaction, a choice she's given, is actually a scripted action.

But I see a heartfelt reaction when she screams at her mother and punches her. Strong emotions must be behind the subject of this dream. It's plain to see.

Punching can mean symbolically "take aim" or "keep your distance," and screaming can mean you aren't being heard (which I think is true in this case), but those actions in this dream are better thought of as reactions that express strong emotions. Screaming and punching, yeah, that's what she feels like. That part of the story is a small picture which fits in the big picture that's emerging for us to see. The reaction paints a picture of someone holding back powerful emotions that could explode if triggered. It's a common feature in the dreams of people who have been chronically abused.

Inner life? Yeah, the dreamer's behavior in this scene is not at all how she acts or has reacted in waking life. It's an [exaggeration](#) that expresses how she feels. It could even portend a development in the woman and her relationship with her mother. She can't change mom, but maybe now's the time to stand up to her. It's part of the resolution of the dream. You're about to find out why.

*Context: it all comes together*

**Step 3: Connect and Reflect**



The dreamer took my suggestions and found obvious parallels in her life. She describes her mom as a manipulative narcissist, and recently mom had pushed her to ask her best friend to marry her. She resisted but relented eventually, just like in the dream when mom manipulates her to poison her dog, and it nearly killed the relationship with her friend.

Here we find the meaning of “poison the relationship” acted out by the dream. Her dog is her best friend. The person she asked to marry her is her other best friend. The connection is made obvious by interpreting the symbolism of poisoning. Simplify poisoning to its basic idea of something that harms and search for the personal parallel.

We also find the meaning of the opening scene. Mom convinces her to do something she knows she shouldn't but does it anyway. That's the simple way of summing up the scene. She then symbolically enacts the drama as poisoning her best friend her dog, another simple idea. In the dream the dog dies, and in her waking life the relationship with her friend nearly died. The dream is reflecting on what happened in her life and dramatizing it as a story about poisoning her beloved pet, a scheme instigated by her mother. It appears horrific on its face, but now we know what it really means and from where it's sourced.

In her waking life, she complains to her family about her mom's manipulations and scheming and they say she's overreacting, just like they do in the dream. It's how her family in general reacts to her. That detail is scripted on reality for the dreamer. She feels like she's fighting a very lonely battle.

*Connect the dots*

Every single detail of the dream constellates around the central idea of going along with mom's scheme: agreeing to poison her dog then doing it; punching and screaming; mom laughing; her family's reaction.

It's all understandable now. After reflection, and with this interpretation in hand, the young woman can consciously process the experience with her mom and best friend. She has a lot to digest.

Resolution is to be determined. The ball is in her court. But now she has a shorthand way of encapsulating the situation. The picture of her rage-punching her sarcastically-laughing mother while her dead pet grows cold in the background says it all.

## *Dreams process memories—which ones?*

The dream occurred a short time after the incident and is based on more than just processing the raw memories and emotions. It draws on memory going back further.

Think of the dream as a "Week in Review," when next-level processing occurs, a regular feature of dream life. Dreaming processes daily memories, and those dreams make up the bulk of our dream lives. Less commonly but regularly, dreams sum up the most important memories and incorporate what you learn from them, and the related dreams are powerful. Sometimes they are life-changing. Dr. Carl Jung calls the most powerful and important ones "Big Dreams."

This dream's many details tell a story that begins with a recent event in the dreamer's outer life, then incorporates aspects of inner life—namely, feelings which have developed and hardened over the course of

many years as the victim of her mom's manipulations. There's a lot to understand about the dreamer to see the parallels between the dream and her life both present and past... and future, when she will either create resolution by breaking free of her mother, or not.

The question begs to be asked, when is she going to tell off her mom?

The dream is influenced by the dreamer's subjective perceptions and feelings and is not read (automatically) as a factual account of what really happened or how things really are. Her mom might have a very different take on the situation, and so might her family.

But when mom as a dream character laughs at her daughter's rage and despair, I see more than a subjective summation of their relationship. I see mom's manipulative narcissism. I see reality for this person.

Knowing this, you as a dream interpreter first look to the outer life of the dreamer to find the source material. Details of the dream relate directly to current events. But a deeper source is found in the personal life of the dreamer. The dream points her inward to find resolution. It amplifies a family situation that's wrecking her. This is how the Dream Source says "damn girl, something needs to change."

The dream is subjective to some extent, but it's objective too in how it presents the story of the dreamer's relationship with her mom and family and the immense distress it causes her.

In the next demo we explore even deeper into how dreams show personally and poignantly the inner life of the dreamer. As we go, keep in mind the following fact from dream psychology: events of your inner life register subconsciously with the same importance as events of your outer life. They are just as real and valid.

One way or another, almost everything in your dreams points towards what's happening inside you, whether or not it's in response to outer life events and circumstances. You have inner life events and circumstances too, that operate by their own rules created largely by you, whether you know it or not. You are subconsciously writing this story you call your life and living under its rules. If you go about it unconsciously, the Dream Source will ask you, when are you going to wake up and claim your power to write your own story the way you want to? You have unlimited creative power, but you must claim it like an inheritance.

As I wrote that last sentence I realized I recently dreamed about writing that sentence. The dream focused on the idea behind the statement, but it was another one of those moments that raise goose bumps. The thing I call the Dream Source is creating my life along with me. It's behind the scenes, it's omniscient, and together we are omnipotent in a sense. In the virtual reality of the dream world we can create anything. In the virtual reality of waking life, the creative power carries over, and I am yet to find the limits of it.

### **Homework**

- Read: [dreaming's role in memory incorporation](#)

# Demo #5: How to Interpret Dreams

## *Interpret inner life dreams*

Our next demo in RadOwl's Crash Course draws its illuminating example dream from my online course [Dreaming for Love and Relationships](#). It's a snapshot of the dreamer's inner life and aims at the heart of her last romantic relationship.

Title: **Things Are Just Dandy—But They're Not**

- ***"I dream I'm living with my ex and his girlfriend and it's all good. No problem. Then I remember, hey wait a minute, HE broke up with ME to be with HER. I scream at him "What is wrong with you! What is wrong with you!" Which is unlike me. Even when we broke up I stayed perfectly calm."***  
*Shared at Reddit Dreams*

At first glance it's natural to suspect this dream is based on outer life because it involves people from her outer life and an event—a breakup—that occurred in it. But the personal context is they broke up a few years ago. *He* broke up with *her* to be with his new girl, the same one in the dream. So the dream correlates with outer life, but it is better understood as an ongoing drama about her inner life.

She really did go through a bad breakup with her ex. He really did dump her to be with his new girl. That's not fiction, but the rest of the story is. I establish these facts first when I help the person interpret her dream. It points me in the right direction.

### **Use D3 to get to the bottom of this dream**

First, the setting. In the opening scene she is living with her ex. What does that really mean? The place where they used to live together is a long-ago memory that could set the scene, but living with him actually means her mind is on him. Perhaps not directly, but the breakup never really left her mind and, just like in the dream, she can be OK as long as she doesn't think too deeply. She lives in that *place* in the sense that she's still in that *personal space*, living with an unanswered and very personal lingering question that's asked during the dream:

What is wrong?

In her dream she directs the question at the image of her ex—best thought of as the actor playing the role of him—but when she asks what's wrong with him, she really means herself. What's wrong with *her* to make him break up with her? What's the other girl got that she don't?

Most questions and statements in dreams point inwards at the dreamer, even when they're apparently directed outwards. She might wonder superficially what's wrong with him, but the dream creates a contrast between her and the girlfriend character and we need to know why. It's purposeful, and it leads us to reverse engineer. The dream didn't have to put the girlfriend character in the scene to tell the basic story about the breakup, so why do it? Answering the question leads to viewing it as directed inwards, not outwards. You'll see why in a moment.

We abbreviated the process of identifying the dream's story elements and narrative components in Step 1. Let's move on.

## *Step 2: Associate, Simplify, Amplify*

The strong emotions in the dream belie the dreamer's calm front. Behind it she's anything but calm. The dream is helping her see how she really feels and the roots of it in the self-doubts that filled the cracks in her self-image after the trauma of the breakup. It's implied in her reaction of screaming at him, "what's wrong with you?" We know what she really means. Something is wrong with her but she is avoiding it.

[Amplify](#) is the method for drilling to the heart of that scene. Dreams amplify so you can see or hear what you're not seeing or hearing and know what you don't know—or don't want to know. They amplify so you can hear the little voices in your head that are ignored or drowned out.

Identifying when dreams amplify helps you analyze the story. Dreams have reasons for amplifying, and knowing what they are helps you to reverse engineer by seeing the motives of the mind that creates your dreams. In this case the dreamer is minimizing the personal impact of the breakup and ignoring the nasty wound in her self-perception. When people minimize, their dreams maximize. They compensate on the other end of the scale. These ideas are all captured by the term "amplify."

The [comparison-contrast tool](#) for story analysis helps us identify that the dream creates a contrast between the dreamer and the new girlfriend. It's purposeful, and reverse engineering gives us a clue that the question asked during the dream is directed inwards. Something really is wrong with her, and it runs deeper than just feeling inadequate in comparison with a romantic rival. The contrast together with amplification points us

towards the idea that something is seriously askew in her inner life. The dream is using every trick in the book to draw her attention there. Now we know why.

Associate: What thoughts come to mind for the dreamer when she thinks about the time of life when she lived her ex and they broke up? Associate with the new girl. Associate with the difference between then and now, knowing that dreams always speak to the present when they refer to the past. It becomes apparent that something is wrong and it began when they broke up. The spontaneous thoughts that come to mind can arise out of her subconscious knowledge of what everything in the dream really means, simple fact #1.

Simplify: What's wrong? Direct the question towards finding the personal context. And ask the question within the story context—it's related somehow to the breakup. That's the scenario outlined in the opening scene, and it's likely to show the dream's central idea.

Inner life? Yeah, entirely. The dream isn't really about the breakup, it's about the lingering questions behind it and the damage it caused.

*Your dream is virtual reality created by you, for you*

Inner life dreams are interpreted mainly by seeing yourself in them. The dreamscape is your inner world projected out for you to interact with in virtual reality. It's presented to you as symbolism and story. As your sleep night progresses and your dreams do the usual processing of memories and maintenance routines for the body, they can then go deeper. If something in you needs healing or fixing, you can bet it will be



prioritized. It'll probably be the subject of dreams that recur in substance and theme until the healing or fixing is accomplished.

The woman who had this dream is sent back in time to the point where her big hurt occurred. The Dream Source isn't doing it to torture her or anything. The point is to help her. She's stuck living in the past. And since she created her dream subconsciously, you could say she's trying to help herself get unstuck.

Since she has not seen nor had contact with her ex-boyfriend since the day they broke up, a fact she shared with me during the interpretation process, there's no way she's processing recent memories of interacting with him. The dream could be processing recent thoughts and feelings about him, but I think it's better to think of him as being her internalized image of him projected into the dream. The dream created a virtual reality environment for her to work through the trauma of the breakup. Since he played a starring role in that life drama, he also plays a starring role in her dream.

His new girlfriend played a secondary role in the breakup drama, but the dream didn't have to place her in the scene. As noted earlier, it must be purposeful. She doesn't say or do anything, she's just there. This is a clue gained through story analysis. It's as if she's plopped into the dream to make the dreamer curious enough to ask, "what's *she* doing here?"

By asking that question, the dreamer recognizes something about herself in the dream character. The character is the embodiment of the other side of the dreamer's split self-perception caused by the breakup. As a rule of hand, splits appear in dreams as opposites or contrasts. In this case, the contrast is between the new girlfriend and the dreamer the ex-girlfriend. As far

as the dreamer knows, the new girlfriend didn't have to live through a trauma like she did or experience the same wounding. Everything is OK in her world, just as it once was in the dreamer's world when she was together with her ex and they lived together as shown in the dream's opening scene.

I see a contrast also between the active role the dreamer plays in the story and the passive role the girlfriend plays. I know from experience that dreams can drop important clues in the form of apparently unimportant dream characters. The point ultimately is to make her wonder and question and really think about it. A personal revelation is waiting.

All splits want to heal. It begins by seeing this one and knowing the main reason for it, and the dream does that by setting up the contrast between the dreamer and the girlfriend. Ultimately, the part of the mind that creates dreams, the unconscious mind, wants to bring the two sides of the dreamer back together as one. It's a natural function of the self-regulating psyche.

Heal the split. That's the resolution of the dream. The dream provides a narrative framework for the dreamer to see and understand what's happening deep within her. It provides a virtual reality space for her to interact with the parts of herself that are stuck in the past and hurting. And it answers the question she asks during the dream. What's wrong with her is she went on living as if the breakup never happened. The longer she keeps up the charade, the more the wound scars over but doesn't heal.

When dreams bring up hurts from the past in a context similar to how it's presented in this dream as a sort of retrospective, it's a sign that the person is ready to heal and the unconscious is sending energy that direction.

## *Your Dreams: It's All You*

Everything you see in your dreams is you. It's your inner world. The dream is your creation and it's entirely subjective. That's a rule of some schools of dream interpretation. I mostly agree with the premise and the approach of focusing inwards while interpreting dreams. But I keep my eyes open for dreams that closely parallel events of outer life, too. Every rule of interpretation has exceptions—it's a very fluid process.

I emphasize approaching dreams as inner dramas that are subjective. When you're new to dream interpretation you must learn this lesson.

OK, you've learned. Now I will tell you that sometimes dreams can be objective and direct in ways that cross into the territory of the nature of consciousness and how it interacts with the invisible layers of reality. Some dreams originate outside of the usual boundaries between the self and the world and require a different set of tools and knowledge to interpret.

Dr. Carl Jung together with Nobel Laureate physicist Wolfgang Pauli theorized that archetypes, the building blocks of the psyche, originate beyond space-time as we know it. Which means that something beyond our ability to understand conventionally is either creating some of our dreams, or influencing some or all of them... or both. Writing that book is next on my list.

## Dream: Creatures Outside her Bedroom Window

*They Come at Night*

- ***"I dream it's nighttime and I'm in my bedroom when I see creepy creatures floating outside my bedroom window. They want to come in but I won't let them."***

*Shared at Reddit Dreams*

**W**hat's trying to get into her personal space? That's the question to kick off the interpretation process because it's the simple idea. Her bedroom is her personal space, and it's where the creatures floating outside her window are trying to get to. She reacts by keeping them out, and that helps narrow down the possibilities for what the imagery symbolizes because it's a reaction based on subconscious knowledge of what she's *really trying to keep out*. The story defines the symbolism of the creatures as something she wants to keep out. OK, start there.

Her outer life *could be* the source, and the creatures *could* symbolize people who intrude in her bedroom or privacy. Bedrooms are private spaces, and anything that intrudes in a bedroom could symbolize something that intrudes on the dreamer's privacy. That possibility jumps out from her description of the dream. If the source is a single person such as a parent, sibling or roommate who is intruding, the dream would be more likely to show it as one creature, so my hunch is it must be many of something since there are many creatures. And besides, the personal context doesn't fit; we ruled out that possibility first thing while interpreting the dream.

I've interpreted similar dreams and found the source in outer life. In one such dream the dreamer's younger sister barges into his bedroom and pees on his bed. In his waking life his sister has a habit of barging into his

bedroom even after he's asked her not to. It feels disrespectful to him, symbolized as her peeing on his bed.

In another such dream a gorilla barges into the dreamer's bedroom and starts messing with his computer. His roommate, who is physically large and strong and known for sudden outbursts of violent temper, has a habit of barging into his bedroom and messing with his computer. The dream symbolizes the roommate as a gorilla. The parallels with outer life are obvious.

In the case of the creatures outside the dreamer's bedroom window, I don't find parallels or connections with outer life. No one intrudes in her bedroom or invades her privacy. It gives me an idea for a question that aims at her inner life: What's trying to get into her thoughts while she's in her bedroom at night? Thoughts can come in clusters. They're known for being intrusive at times. Intrusive thoughts tend to occur when a person is in private. I ask her the question.

Her answer: she's been keeping out thoughts related to her ex-boyfriend and their recent break up. The challenge comes when her busy day is over and she's alone at night in her bedroom with nothing else to think about. The thoughts are like creatures floating outside her window waiting for the chance to get in. She won't allow it, so the creatures stay out.

### *Step 3: Connect and Reflect*

The personal context ties together every detail of the dream. It tells us what the creatures symbolize and explains the action of them wanting in. It explains why the dream's setting is her bedroom: it's where she's located when the intrusive thoughts occur, and it

doubles as a symbol for her most personal inner space. The window can be opened and closed, and by keeping it closed she's shutting out the thoughts about her ex that want her attention.

Now imagine someone in a similar situation who can't keep out the intrusive thoughts. Who, when alone at night, allows them into their personal mental space. How would it change the story?

## *More story analysis*

Metaphors commonly use windows in relation to the inner world of a person, like in the figure of speech, "the eyes are the windows to the soul." Metaphors commonly use windows in relation to the inner world of a person, like in the figure of speech, "the eyes are the windows to the soul." As soon as the dream mentions a window, I'm [analyzing the story](#) for use of metaphor. I've seen this use of window symbolism many times in dreams to speak to what's trying to slip into the inner world of the dreamer: thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions, memories. Even eye infections! An infection originates externally of the body then enters it, and if a home in a dream symbolizes the person's body, anything that enters can symbolize something entering the body.

Notice how much the dream packs into one scene. It mirrors a minor but important fact about the dreamer's life and can say a lot in a simple scene that impacted her enough to seek help for understanding it.

On the other hand, "Big Dreams" tend to have three scenes or more and follow a structure of giving background in the opening scene, showing present conditions in the next scene, then pointing toward resolution or likely future or best-case outcomes in the

final scene. They show past, present, and future. These dreams are very likely to at least incorporate some aspects of the dreamer's inner life. These dreams are very likely to at least incorporate some aspects of the dreamer's inner life. When they are highly metaphorical and fantastical too, you can bet that inner life is the main focus of them, perhaps the sole focus.

Moral of the story: Inner life dreams are a wide spectrum of experience, and whether they are long and complex or short and sweet, they can teach you much about yourself.

## Dream: My Deceased Mom Told Me I'll Join Her in a Few Years

- ***"My mom passed away 15 months ago, but only recently has she been appearing in my dreams. I've had three of these dreams, they're all pretty dull but it's helping me heal. We usually just chat, and she always looks very tired. The last dream was a few nights ago. In it I told her I missed her, and she said while casually drinking tea, "I know, but you can't join me yet, when you're about 33, maybe 34, yeah." This terrified me so much that I woke up soon after, and I haven't seen her since in my dreams. Do I have a reason to be afraid here?"***

**R**ight away I know where to go with this dream because I've seen its type time and again. Oftentimes, what people see in their deceased loved one in a dream is something they see or fear seeing in themselves. The loved one is dead. Who better for a

dream to choose to tell a story about following in their footsteps? It's not a prophecy though.

Mom in the dream looks tired and worn out. She died that way. Now her daughter—the person who had the dream—fears it happening to her. What she sees in mom she sees in herself—tired, worn down, health failing—or could see in herself if she continues wearing herself out like her mom did.

It's not too late for this person. Dreams are timely. The part of your mind that creates your dreams know what's up and has a good idea what's coming up in your life, and it provides updates nightly. Another reason to pay attention to your dreams!

A common mistake is to presume the deceased loved one in a dream is their spirit visiting. That's the exception; usually such dreams are entirely personal and about the dreamer. It's a dream—interpret it that way as a story told using symbolism. Mom is a symbol and she's used as part of a story.

A simple question to ask this dreamer to help her understand her dream is, what are you trying to tell yourself? It appears obvious that she's telling herself that she's hurtling towards an early death, just like her mom. It explains why the dream terrifies her.

## Dream: My Best Friend Back from the Dead

### *Losing You Again*

- ***"In my dream I'm driving along in my car like normal when suddenly my best friend who died six months ago appears in the back seat. I'm so happy***



***she's back and want to know what happened—how it happened! But then she fades away and I cry, "I don't want to lose you again!"***"

**I**mportant people in our lives imprint on us, and often it's that imprint you see as them in your dreams. Doesn't matter when or how long it's been since they were in your life.

People from your past will appear in your dreams, and unless they're somehow involved in your recent life or they've been on your mind consciously or subconsciously, you aren't processing recent memories. In this example the friend died six months prior to the dream, and in the last example the mom died more than a year prior. Context points us towards inner life—that's the likely source of the dreams.

The dream is a view of something happening inside you. A development in your personality? An emotion, thought, or perception? Movement in your psyche? These are all possibilities, but I look first at the body and brain and processes that run while dreaming—and in some cases, run only while dreaming—because these dreams are the most common type. And when they touch on emotional subjects, they stand out from the many dreams you can have in a night and easily forget.

### *The friend is a memory fading away*

A memory process called neuroplasticity runs only while dreaming, and you can expect to have related dreams that symbolically play out what's happening inside your skull, though usually this type of dream isn't very memorable—unless it involves an *emotional or otherwise personally important subject*. Neuroplasticity means that the neural pathways become receptive to

changes. They become “plastic.” The brain creates new pathways, strengthens others, and gets rid of some, known as “pruning” like trimming a vine.

My best guess is that’s what we see happening in the dream where the deceased friend appears then fades out. When the neural pathways connected to memories of the deceased friend heat up, the friend appears in the dream. The image of the friend is associated with the memories, so naturally the dreaming mind shows the friend. Then what happens when the related neural pathways change?

First, look at how the scene opens with the dreamer driving along like usual when her friend appears. If the dreamer was struggling with the loss of her friend and it was the sort of thing to interrupt her daily routine—personal context—I’d wonder if the dream shows her struggle, but that’s not the case. If the friend’s death was recent I’d wonder if the dreamer is digesting it, but again not the case.

Instead, I see neuroplasticity. I see the brain running the process of rewiring and saying *hey, we aren’t using these pathways regularly anymore. What do you say we reconfigure to free up these resources?*

Then I see the dreamer reacting to that prospect. As memories “fade” they can feel like losing something associated with them. The friend fades away in the dream, and what better way of explaining it in this context than fading memory.

The dreamer cries that she doesn’t want to lose her friend again, and I think she reacts that way because she subconsciously knows what’s happening and *feels the loss*.

What does she fear losing and how is it associated with her friend? Those are the questions that lead to the

answer. Without knowing that the dream is a view into a memory process, the dreamer might answer that she fears forgetting about her friend. That could be what the dream is really showing her. It's showing her too that she doesn't want it to happen, judging by her strong reaction. This dream, like all dreams, has layers of meaning, so everything I've suggested could apply.

I used to think that all dreams about the deceased were entirely subjective. So-called visitation dreams are actually a view of memory processes or psychological digestion. They hit hard because maybe there's a hard lesson or realization in them, or the emotions are strong, or the wound's raw. But I've learned that some of them are real visitations. Below, I explain how to distinguish them.

- Explore: [How to tell if a visitation dream is "real" or imaginary](#)

Or search [dreams123.net](http://dreams123.net) for the term "radowl visitation dreams."

Next, a review of RadOwl's Crash Course. We have leveled up through all the intro material Dream School offers. But you can learn and know much more. The next levels are waiting for you at [DreamSchool.net](http://DreamSchool.net).

# Review: RadOwl's Crash Course

**N**ow you have the outline of a dream interpretation process that's taken me 25 years to develop. Tested thousands of times on the dreams of people around the world. It works, and it's as simple as it gets.

And it's only a starting point.

Dreams are endlessly varied and layered and my Crash Course can only teach so much. Plus, some dreams can't be understood conventionally. We're accustomed to cause and effect, and in this book I have shown causes from outer and inner life and their effects on dream life. But dreaming isn't linear, and we're only beginning to really understand what it is and what it's for.

You are the only one who really knows what your dreams mean, and you have the rest of your life to figure it all out.

- **Let's review.**

## 3 Simple Facts

1. Subconsciously, you know what your dreams mean. You know it while dreaming and it influences how you react and how the story unfolds.
2. Dreams are stories. Like parables, they teach and illuminate.
3. Dreams use symbolism. They are figurative and communicate meaning with symbolic imagery.

# 3 Simple Steps

1. Elements and Components: Identify the dream's story elements and narrative components.
2. Interpret and Analyze: Interpret the symbolism and analyze the story.
3. Connect and Reflect: Connect a dream's details in context and reflect on your life.

## Answer these questions if you can

Is the dream's source in your outer life, or does it at least begin there before turning inward? If so, you begin your search for the source in recent events and experiences. You might find specific memories connected with the dream, or memories that are a starting point.

Is your inner life the source of the dream or details of it? If so, you focus on what you've been thinking and feeling lately and experiencing in your inner core, keeping in mind that events of your internal life register subconsciously as being just as real and valid as events of your outer life.

Is there a moral to the story? Find it and learn from it.

What is the dream really saying? It's told to you as a story using symbolism. It's figurative, not literal.

Why did you give yourself the experience? Something deep in your mind or even beyond your mind creates the experience. Find the reason or reasons and you can find the meaning.

What's the message you are sending yourself?

Does the dream have a subject or central idea that connects the dots? If so, it's probably found in the opening scene.

## The dream interpretation process

You know the step by step process of D3: identify, interpret, and connect.

Use tools to interpret the symbolism: associate, simplify, amplify.

Use tool to analyze the story: metaphor, exaggerate, comparison-contrast.

Now look for inroads to the meaning in anything about a dream you can understand or follow into your memories, beginning with the most recent memories. Pick up a thread of meaning wherever you can find it and see where it leads. It'll tie in with the dream's symbolism and story.

Focus first on what you can decode, understand, or trace. Uncover clues by questioning details and observing how the story is constructed. Go where the evidence leads. Or just sit with some aspect of the dream such as a setting or character and wait for ideas and answers to come to you.

Find the personal parallels. Dreams are always about you. You can see yourself reflected in every aspect of a dream.

Use what you learn to reflect on your life.

## 4 Keys for Quick Dream

# Analysis

**Q**uick is the key word. The following keys for quick dream analysis help you generate ideas for the meaning of a dream or some aspect of it. A key only opens the door. You still must walk through it to know what's on the other side. The four keys:

- Consider the obvious meaning.
- Follow your feelings.
- Simplify.
- Identify storytelling devices.

## *Key #1: Consider the obvious meaning*

Some dreams have obvious meaning. The message is right there.

Example: A woman dreams she goes behind her home and finds steps leading down to an underground room. She sees her boyfriend waiting for her at a table in the middle of the room and sits across from him. He tells her, "Limit your intake of red meat." He repeats the statement twice. What's the obvious message?

Another example: A man dreams about his bed catching fire. He wakes up and has a hunch to check behind the bed. A wall outlet has gone bad and an electrical cord is smokin' hot.

The meaning is obvious. The message is obvious. Less red meat might mean something such as less heaviness, and the dreamer really needs less heaviness in her life, but limiting red meat can also mean just that: limit your intake of red meat.

A bed on fire is a visual metaphor for hot, sexual passion. That's what the dream imagery can mean in some contexts.

In both cases though, the people who had these dreams started by considering their obvious message. It's the [first rule](#) of dream interpretation. If the man who had the bedroom dream feels like he's burning up with passion, he might think that's the meaning. But he was wise to follow his hunch and look behind his bed. Otherwise, he might have missed the obvious message and found out the hard way that the image of a burning bed is NOT a metaphor!

## *Key #2: follow your feelings*

Feelings in dreams are rooted in simple fact #1. What you feel in response to a dream is based on subconscious knowledge of what it really means. Therefore what you feel can be used to reveal the true meaning of the dream's story and symbolism.

Dream symbols always have an emotional dynamic. When you interpret a dream you do so knowing it somehow expresses emotional dynamics. For some people it's the best way through the interpretation process. Their feelings tell them all they need to know. In fact, a technique known as "embodied dreamwork" relies on feedback from the body and what a person feels physically to understand a dream.

Feelings are often expressed through reactions both during the dream and afterward while reflecting on it. The dream sets up a story and you react to it, and it shows you what you really think and feel.

## *Key #3: Simplify*



In simplest terms, describe the dream itself, a scene within it, or a detail of it. This helps you to see the idea or set of ideas behind the imagery. Then you formulate questions for yourself based on the simple idea. It doesn't work in all cases, but you see how well it worked in the demonstrations we just covered.

### *Key #4: Identify storytelling devices*

Your dreaming mind is a terrific storyteller, and metaphorical symbolism is its go-to method. If you find a metaphor enacted, such as "climb the ladder" or "slippery road," focus on it. The dream is likely using metaphor to express meaning.

The dreaming mind has access to all the storytelling devices used by authors, directors, and other storytellers, not just metaphors. I've seen dreams use puns, wordplay, backstory, flashback, flashforward, nested stories, point of view, fable, and much more. It makes you wonder whether the dreaming mind learns from us how to tell stories, or if we learned how to tell stories from our dreams. Study the storytelling craft and it'll take you far as a dream interpreter.

## Your turn

I invite you to join me at [Reddit Dreams](https://www.reddit.com/r/Dreams): [dreams.reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/Dreams). It's a community of dream enthusiasts eager to share dreams and give and accept help understanding dreams. If you want to be a dream interpreter, think of it as on-the-job training, and your job is to help people figure out their dreams for themselves. You have the tools, the knowledge, and the D3 process. Say hi to RadOwl while you're there.

You really are the best interpreter of your dreams. You just need to know how to do it.

And now you know how I do it.

Continue your training at [Dream School](#).

**Simple. Effective. Modern.**

# Why We Dream (and What We Can Learn)

Nature has reasons for everything, including for dreaming. Centuries of intense debate and still the reason for dreaming eludes a consensus opinion, because there's no one reason, there are many reasons.

A widely accepted theory about dreaming, *threat-rehearsal*, is put forward by the field of evolutionary biology. Dreaming evolved as a way to adapt to environmental conditions and increase the odds of survival by rehearsing threat scenarios.

While this theory is plausible for why we dream, neither threat-rehearsal nor any other theory (and there are many) captures the entire range of dream phenomena. It's too vast and multifaceted, and a theory that works well to explain one type of dream fails to explain other types.

In my experience, some dreams are best described as rehearsals, and they can rehearse scenarios involving physical threats. In times past, survival was a more pressing matter for humanity, so it's surmisable that dreaming for threat-rehearsal is an outgrowth of human evolution and adaptation. For modern humans though, threats are more likely to come as emotional, mental, spiritual, personal, and financial, and those threats are the kinds we see most often in our dreams.

Dreams zero in on threats and give them first priority, but dreams aren't all stormy nights and crying kids. Dreaming is a process for healing and restoration, then for processing and digesting, then for learning and exploration—and fun. Once survival and threat issues are addressed, your dreams can move on to other priorities.

I think dreaming is also both a personal and social process—dreaming has a shared channel that we're all tuned to for at least part of our dream time.

Knowing *why* you dream can help you understand *what* you dream. Know the reasons behind a dream you're interpreting and you can see them reflected in the dream content. And more, you can answer the most important question: why did you give yourself the experience?

## *Dreaming What Tomorrow May Bring*

An approach to dreaming that comes to us from the field of neuroscience views it as the brain's way of testing possible future outcomes. If you do A, will it lead to B? To C? Viewed this way, dreaming is more about rehearsal and less about threat.

Some dreams are best viewed as virtual reality simulations, and testing possible outcomes is the best way of explaining them. The ultimate rehearsal! It might be better understood as a parallel process rather than a primary one. We're always learning, testing, projecting, and guessing. There's no reason to think those processes and subprocesses only occur while you're awake, and every reason to think they're more effective when they occur while you're asleep and undistracted.

The brain is a prediction engine—it draws from what it knows to render the experience of reality—and prediction is its root level of creating the experience of consciousness through the senses. You get what you expect in more ways than one!

You can dream while awake—actual REM-pattern dreaming—and experience the brain creating a perception of reality based on prediction rather than fact. Even when you're fully awake, the imagery and sensations produced by the brain are [hallucinatory](#), basically, because the brain

shows you what it thinks is happening presently based on prior experience. It's not a big step to then grasp that perception creates reality itself. Perception is entirely the domain of consciousness, as far as we know, and therefore entirely subjective. Which means that reality is subjective.

Dr. Carl Jung says, "In sleep, fantasy takes the form of dreams. But in waking life, too, we continue to dream beneath the threshold of consciousness, especially when under the influence of repressed or other unconscious complexes."

The experience of dreaming and the experience of waking life are not so different, and might even be thought of best as parallel experiences. That's why I cringe when I hear people state confidently that dreams aren't real. Little do they know....

Dreaming might even be essential for creating reality from the quantum field of probability. We choose which probabilities become reality, and we're shown the probabilities as symbols and story in our dreams. We create tomorrow. I can't prove it, but my gut tells me it's true.

## *Rewiring and reconfiguring*

With modern technology you can watch the brain rewire itself while dreaming. You give stimuli such as sounds to dreaming subjects, watch related areas of the brain light up and infer what it's responding to. And you can test a person or animal to see improvements in memory, skill, concentration and comprehension after a period of dreaming—sometimes after just a nap.

But there's so much more happening while dreaming.

Dreaming expands your scope of thinking and cross-references wide ranging thoughts and thought processes. It makes connections that are missed consciously, and it

facilitates creative and unconventional thinking. It helps us identify patterns and see where things are headed. What an advantage it is to know what tomorrow may bring!

## *Dreams Aren't Brain Farts*

*Activation-synthesis*, a popular theory about dreaming that claims it results from the brain's attempt to interpret random signal noise generated in the brain stem while sleeping, aka the *Brain Fart Theory*, is widely believed. When people say "dreams are meaningless and science proved it!" they are usually referring to this theory. The observations about brain activity while dreaming that form the basis of *activation-synthesis* are valid, but the conclusions are way off base. The dreaming mind is a translator. It takes input received while asleep and translates it to symbolic imagery and sensation. Some input may be best described as random signal noise, but it's far from the only input.

However, I will say that some dreams are not meaningful in the traditional sense. The so-called random signal noise could be the mind warming up for the deeper dreaming that occurs later in the sleep process, like an orchestra warming up before a performance. It sounds like noise, but it becomes music during the performance. To say that all dreams are meaningless based on the observation that some dream imagery is meaningless is a terrible mistake. We have more than a century of accumulated clinical evidence that shows beyond all doubt that dreams are personally meaningful and significant.

## *Processing, digesting, and more*

You don't have to be a neuroscientist to know that dreams can be deeply emotional. What most people don't know is that emotional digestion is intrinsic to dreaming—emotional

dynamics are present as information in every dream symbol. Thank researcher Bob Hoss of DreamScience.org for that insight, and thank sleep-medicine specialist Dr. Reuben Naiman for his two-word summary of dreaming: psychological digestion. Dreaming helps you psychologically digest your experience of life.

You can even dream in response to what's being physically digested at the time!

What are you processing? What are you digesting? Add these questions to the list to ask yourself as you interpret a dream.

Ultimately you dream to become a complete person. Carl Jung says the ideal outcome is to become a fully formed individual by uniting the conscious mind with the unconscious mind. ***"You dream to become what you really are in your deepest inner being."***

That's a lesson for another time. But if you're curious and want to know more, take my Master Course on Dream Interpretation. You can find it at DreamSchool.net.

## *Live your dreams*

In our language we use the word "dream" to also mean the big ideas you have for your life. A dream is a wish in one sense, and when a wish comes true we say it's a dream come true.

These two meanings of "dream" parallel one another. The dreams you have by night can come in response to the dreams you have by day—the big ideas and wishes you "dream up"—supporting what's best for you and guiding toward it. Dreams can also feed you ideas about the person you can be and the ideal life you can live. I think of it as a loop of personal energy connecting waking life and dream life.

To live your dreams, pay attention to them. Journal them. Give them your time and energy. You can be the best dream interpreter and fall short of your potential in the eyes of the dreaming mind if you miss the point of it all. Then there's the person who simply falls asleep relishing the experiences to come and wakes up feeling grateful and eager to use what they learn, and they truly "get it."

That's how you make your dreams come true. In your mind, heart, and spirit you bring the dream world into the waking world via the medium of your being. And it can be as simple as merely reflecting on your dreams with a sense of play and wonder.



# How to Know a Dream Interpretation Is Accurate

## *My 4 ways to tell*

**H**ow do you know a dream interpretation is accurate? I'll say first, the point isn't always to be right or correct. Just work with the dream. The energy it sends into your unconscious mind returns to you. The effort pays off whether or not you correctly interpret the dream.

The unconscious mind, aka the Dream Source, wants you to know it, and it wants to know you. It wants you to understand its messages. There are rules to this interaction, though, and rule #1 is the conscious mind must engage. It must have the desire and intent and be ready to know the truth and see into the unlit spaces inside. When you want to know if you have accurately interpreted your dream, the desire comes first and will take you a long way. The Dream Source will respond.

You can take one dream to four dream interpreters and get four different interpretations. Which one if any is accurate? Here are my four ways to tell.

- You know a dream interpretation is accurate because it feels right. You respond internally, whether or not you figure it out for yourself. Like when a word is on the tip of your tongue, you feel a sharp reaction internally when a dream's meaning comes to you.
- You know a dream interpretation is accurate because it is consistent with other dreams. Most dreams run like rivers through our lives. They have commonalities in the themes, narratives, stories, symbolism and

meaning. Always consider the element of surprise as you work with dreams, but I find more often than not that there's a consistency to them, and I can use my work with dreams-past to decipher dreams-present.

- You know a dream interpretation is accurate because every detail can be understood symbolically or as part of the story and experience. Dr. Carl Jung says a correct dream interpretation accounts for every detail. Everything fits as part of a big picture, and in one look it shares a jackpot of information about situational and personal dynamics.
- Time will tell. Interpretations are proven correct by subsequent experience.

Since there is no such thing as a dream with only one meaning, one dream can have multiple accurate interpretations. Dream symbols are packed with information, and the layers of meaning and personal significance multiply when symbols string together to tell a story. So keep your mind open to the unfolding mystery as you explore your dreams. It's nice to be surprised when new layers of a dream are revealed to you. Take it as a good sign of progress.

Dreams preview coming attractions in your life's journey and your inner development. Dr. Jung tells us that dreams invariable show the ego what it does not know or understand—but is soon to be known and understood because it's coming into the light of conscious awareness. It's emerging in you, and the best midwife in this birthing process is your willingness to do the inner work, see yourself as you really are and know the truth. It takes time.

With some dreams you simply can't know right away whether or not an interpretation is on target. The amount of time for the light to switch on inside you can be a

moment, or a month or longer. I've had the meaning of a dream come to me years after the fact, sometimes seemingly out of the blue.

Seemingly.

The work was going on behind the scenes the whole time. My desire to know the truth about myself keeps the flame burning.

Also, the dreaming mind is like a time machine. It can look ahead in time, known as [precognition](#), and back in time, known as retrocognition. Most dreams will NOT be fully known and understood until time passes and life unfolds. Usually it's due to the fact the dreams show you what's emerging in you, and the rational mind is not yet equipped to recognize what it sees. Occasionally it's because a dream looked ahead in time, and you won't know it until the time comes.

Periodically review your dream journals. It's fascinating to see how dreams that were once inscrutable become clear.

## *What's Next? Resolution*

A reader of the first edition of this book contacted me to say he wished I'd say more about what to do after a dream is correctly understood.

He's asking about resolution.

Resolution is a narrative component. You identify where the dream answers questions, provides insights, and solves problems. But resolution isn't always present in the dream content. Some dreams are "to be continued." Some wait to see how you respond before offering resolution. Some merely illustrate and provide perspective and information for you to create your own resolution.

Dreams show; you decide. The intelligence behind your dreams respects you and your independence. It wants to

empower you, not make your decisions for you.

If you have a specific question to answer or problem to solve, you might have a dream that gives specific advice. But in my experience, most of the answers from dreams come in a form like a Zen koan. It's a paradoxical statement designed to engage more than just the rational mind. A koan crafted correctly confounds the rational mind and forces a deeper search within oneself.

I'll spare you the paradoxical statements and just say this: respond to the dream. When you respond, the dreaming mind responds. And it will craft a story a thousand different ways until you have the "aha!" moment of illumination. Just keep trying.

I offer a class that teaches how to find resolution in dream content and tap the amazing wisdom of your dreams. Search online for the term "dream school dream resolution." Or go to [DreamSchool.net](http://DreamSchool.net). A shorter, freely available lesson is yours at [Dreams123.com](http://Dreams123.com).

The following are my tips.

First, journal your dreams. It sends a message that you are listening. Every morning you wake up with anticipation. *What did my dreams say last night? What adventures lie ahead?* Write down your dreams in present tense, and add the date and a title that summarizes the dream. Write down everything you remember, even fragments and related thoughts and feelings. Do it first thing when you wake up, while your mind is clear and the memories are fresh.

Second, if a dream offers specific advice, do something with it. The dreaming mind is patient, but it can't fight your battles for you. You must make the effort.

Beyond that:

- If a dream makes a suggestion, run with it.

- If it raises a question, answer it.
- If it points out a problem, solve it.
- If it mentions a subject, explore it.
- If it shows a fear, confront it.
- If it opens a new road, travel it.

Working with your dreams builds a relationship with the part of the mind that creates dreams, the unconscious. Simply engaging with it makes it engage with you. The unconscious loves you for the unique and free-willed person you are. You as a conscious being are its “other half,” its counterpart, its soulmate. You are like the tree that grows in its soil. It’s always available whether or not you are dreaming. Life itself is like a dream, after all. Life responds to your true thoughts and feelings, and so does the intelligence behind your dreams. Everything else is just noise. So speak with your heart and mean everything you say. Watch closely in your dream life and waking life for how it responds.

Especially watch for synchronicities where a coincidence feels meaningful. It’s life responding to you and helping to tell your story as you define it in your relationship with life itself. The more effort you give to the becoming what you truly are inside, the more life supports you. Resolution will then come more easily.

Synchronicities are the ultimate way to judge that your dream interpretations and relationship with your unconscious mind are on track. Your dream world overlays with your waking world, and dream life with waking life. Watching and waiting for signs and synchronicities can feel unbearable, especially when you’re at a crossroads and in need of answers. But when you bear the tension and hold solid ground between the opposites of change and staying the same, you produce a response. The archetypes of the

unconscious produce a dream symbol that transcends the opposites. The symbol is full of energy, and it is a gateway to your deepest self where the symbol originates. By working with the symbol through dream interpretation and analysis, you influence the creation of your reality.

You become the author of your life.

You become who you really are.

And you never look back.

# End Credits

This is the conclusion of RadOwl's Crash Course in Dream Interpretation. Written by J.M. DeBord.

I hope you have enjoyed this book and learned a lot. And I hope you will dive enthusiastically into your dream world equipped with tools of dream interpretation and analysis I have given you. I want you to know the rich inner world that is shown to you through your dreams, and to claim the power to shape your life.

I suggest that you sign up for my newsletter "We Love Dreams" to continue your learning journey. I'll send you everything you need,

[dreams123.net/newsletter](http://dreams123.net/newsletter)

Or search online for "We Love Dreams newsletter."

[jmdebord.com](http://jmdebord.com) is my personal website.

"RadOwl" is my name at YouTube.

[dreams123.com](http://dreams123.com) teaches the D3 process in rich detail.

Dreams123.net is my dream site and blog.

[DreamSchool.net](http://DreamSchool.net) is my online school for dream interpretation.

On any given day you can find me at the most popular online place to share and interpret dreams, Reddit Dreams, [dreams.reddit.com](http://dreams.reddit.com). I've been lead moderator of that community since 2013, and people there know me as RadOwl.

Thank you. And please review this book at Amazon and share it with your friends. I really appreciate the support of my readers. Every good word you say about my teachings is tremendously helpful.



J.M. DeBord is an author, editor, and audiobook producer. Find out more about him at [jmdebord.com](http://jmdebord.com) and [RADaudiobooks.com](http://RADaudiobooks.com). Other books by J.M.:

[The Dream Interpretation Dictionary: Symbols, Signs, and Meanings, published by Visible Ink Press](#)

[Dreams 1-2-3: Remember, Interpret, and Live Your Dreams, published by Hampton Roads Publishing](#)